

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

for Massachusetts Community Public Water Suppliers



**PREPARED BY CONOVER &
COMPANY COMMUNICATIONS, INC.
AND MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT
OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
JULY, 1999**

Supported by your Safe Drinking Water Act Assessment.



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
ONE WINTER STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108 617-292-5500

July, 1999

Dear Community Public Water Supplier,

Under federal EPA regulations, all community public water systems must provide annual drinking water quality reports to their customers and to the state. The Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) Rule sets a deadline of October 19, 1999 for delivery of your first report. This document, "Consumer Confidence Report, Communications Plan for Community Public Water Suppliers," is designed to help you in meeting your CCR requirements.

This plan provides information on various communication vehicles that you can use with CCRs and with ongoing outreach programs. Select the vehicles that are appropriate for your system. Refer to the Project Cost Sheet (**Appendix A**) for cost and time estimates. The appendices contain sample water quality reports and directories for environmental and educational resources.

Use this plan in conjunction with "*Preparing Consumer Confidence Reports: A Guide to the Massachusetts Requirements for Community Public Drinking Water Systems, DEP, May 1999*," that outlines the CCR requirements and contains technical appendices. Visit our website at www.state.ma.us/dep for more CCR information.

We look forward to working with you in communicating with your customers. We believe that communication is key to building trust and consumer confidence in public drinking water.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Y. Terry".

David Y. Terry, Program Director
Drinking Water Program

Executive Summary

The Consumer Confidence Reports (CCR) were mandated by the 1996 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), which requires all community water systems to prepare and provide annual reports. The CCR is designed to inform consumers about the source, quality, and compliance levels of their drinking water. Community Public Water Systems (PWSs) must deliver their first CCR by October 19, 1999, and submit subsequent CCRs by July 1st of each year.

Conover & Company Communications, Inc. has prepared a communications program to assist both DEP and community PWSs with the requirements of the SDWA that relate to the creation and distribution of CCRs. This document is one component of a larger initiative, designed to assist community PWSs in meeting SDWA requirements.

The CCR is an excellent opportunity for PWSs to communicate with and educate their customers. By taking a proactive stance and exceeding regulatory requirements when preparing and distributing the CCRs, community suppliers can highlight the many benefits their systems provide to customers. Moreover, PWSs can use the CCR to garner support for other initiatives they wish to undertake. Community PWSs need to use the CCR as one of many marketing tools and integrate it as a part of their planned communications and public relations efforts. For those water systems that do not have an ongoing communications program, the CCR should be the catalyst to improve customer relations, educate consumers, and enhance consumers' perceptions and understanding of the water system.

However, with the dissemination of such data runs the possibility of misinterpretation. Certain members of the public are likely to be concerned about water quality data reported by the CCR. It is therefore important for community PWSs to raise public awareness about the content of the CCR so that it will be accurately understood.

The SDWA establishes the content requirements for the CCR. However, the SDWA does not dictate its format. Each community water system has the opportunity to develop its own CCR in the style in which it believes its customers will best receive and understand that information.

In developing a CCR that both complies with SDWA requirements and is readily understandable by consumers, PWSs have numerous resources at their disposal. The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, the American Water Works Association, the New England Water Works Association, and the National Rural Water Association created templates to simplify the CCR process. These templates are helpful because they contain the required language and the PWS inputs the system specific information.



The CCR should be the catalyst to improve customer relations, educate consumers, and enhance consumers' understanding of the water system.

All community water systems should have an ongoing communications program directed at building public confidence in water quality and the system.

Community water systems are required to make CCRs widely available to the public. The statutory requirements regarding report delivery state that “... each Community water system must mail or otherwise directly deliver one copy of the report to each customer. The system must make a good faith effort to reach consumers who do not get water bills, using means recommended by the primacy agency.”

In this communications plan, we categorize specific communication vehicles by system size — both required and recommended — for the community PWSs. Not all of the components discussed will be used by each system. Therefore, after each communications vehicle, we will list system requirements or recommendations based on size. In some cases, there will be additional requirements for the largest systems (serving 100,000 or more customers) or waivers for the smaller systems (serving 10,000 or fewer customers). The attached timeline should aid the community PWS in this process.

The communication efforts initiated to accompany the delivery of the CCR should not be a one-shot deal. All community water systems should have an ongoing communications program directed at building public confidence in water quality and the system. Open houses, public outreach, and work with the local media should be continual so that customers and the media have contact with the utility at times other than just the annual CCR or a crisis. *Ongoing communication is the key to public trust and confidence.*



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Communications Strategy

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers the CCRs as the “centerpiece of the public right-to-know in SDWA.” Specifically the EPA believes that the CCRs can:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers the CCRs as the “centerpiece of the public right-to-know in SDWA.”

- Raise consumer awareness of the source of their water;
- Help consumers understand the process through which safe drinking water arrives at their homes;
- Educate consumers about the importance of preventative measures, such as source water protection, that ensure a safe drinking water supply;
- Promote dialogue between consumers and their drinking water utilities;
- Encourage consumers to become more involved in decisions which may affect their health; and
- Help consumers find more information about source water assessments, health effects data and their water system.

By taking a proactive stance and exceeding regulatory requirements, community PWSs can inform their customers about all the benefits that the system provides.

The CCR requirement provides an opportunity and a challenge to community PWSs. As an opportunity, the CCR is an occasion to communicate with and educate customers. By taking a proactive stance and exceeding regulatory requirements, community PWSs can inform their customers about all the benefits that the system provides. Moreover, they can use the CCR to garner support for other initiatives they wish to undertake.

However, the CCR cannot be expected to achieve the above as a stand-alone tool. Even those systems that actively communicate with their customers and meet federal standards are confronted with some risk over the CCR. The CCR will contain technical information and unfamiliar terms. The likelihood is very high that language discussing contaminants in their drinking water will raise fears of health risks and may undermine consumers’ confidence in the community water system. Making the data understandable and easily accessible to the lay reader will certainly help. However, to expect the CCR to promote confidence in their water supply without other communication would be naive. Community PWSs that do not communicate regularly with their customers or that do have contaminant levels exceeding federal standards, are at greater risk of having customers’ faith in their public drinking water and the management of their system

Language discussing contaminants in their drinking water will raise fears of health risks and may undermine consumers’ confidence in the community water system.

eroded upon receipt of the CCR.

If CCRs are to be understood by customers and not incite alarm, community PWSs and DEP must develop and implement a strategic communications program to educate consumers and other key influencers about their drinking water. The program should include information about:

- 1) The source and safety of the water;
- 2) How the water gets to their homes;
- 3) U.S. EPA contaminant standards, local community PWS levels of contaminants and what this means;
- 4) Non-regulated substances that impact the taste, odor, and color of the water;
- 5) The source of contaminants;
- 6) Potential health concerns related to contaminants, preventative measures the systems and consumers can take to ensure a safe drinking water supply;
- 7) How water is tested and water quality is monitored;
- 8) Qualifications and experience of local water suppliers; and
- 9) Where to get more information (local, state, federal and other sources).

The CCR will be just one of a variety of ongoing public education activities and should by no means serve as the principal element of an outreach program.

The CCR will be just one of a variety of ongoing public education activities and should by no means serve as the principal element of an outreach program. By the time a consumer receives a CCR, some of the information should have been available through outreach to public health officials, elected officials and the medical community.

Audiences

1) Customers

The intent of the CCR is to communicate information regarding water quality to all community water system consumers. This includes both bill paying and non-bill-paying customers (such as renters, condominium owners and residents of assisted living complexes who are served by the system but do not receive bills directly).

2) Key Influencers

Key influencers such as public health officials (local and state); elected officials (local and state); civic, environmental, and business groups; and the medical community should be informed.

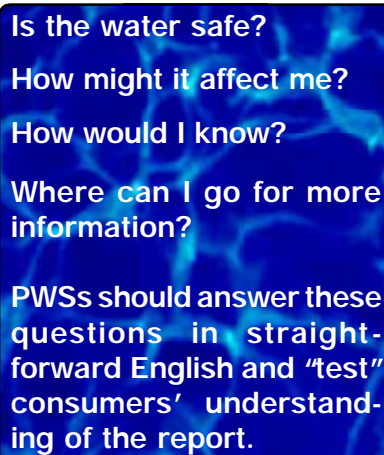
The intent of the CCR is to communicate information regarding water quality to all community water system consumers.

A list of several statewide key influencer groups is located at **Appendix B**.

Messages

The delivery content of the CCR is specified by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). Reports *must* include, but are not limited to, the following information:

- 1) Source of water purveyed and notice of the availability of source water assessments;
- 2) Definitions of “maximum contaminant level goal,” “maximum contaminant level,” “variances,” and “exemptions”;
- 3) Levels of any detected contaminant; if the detected value is above the maximum contaminant level (MCL), include special health effects language, the length of the violation, the likely sources of contamination, and any corrective measures taken by the the water system;
- 4) Information on compliance with National Primary Drinking Water Regulations, a notice if the system is operating under a variance or exemption, and the basis on which the variance or exemption was granted;
- 5) Information on levels of unregulated contaminants for which monitoring is required under section 1445 (a) (2); and
- 6) A statement that the presence of contaminants in drinking water does not necessarily indicate that the drinking water poses a health risk, and that more information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800.426.4791.



Is the water safe?
How might it affect me?
How would I know?
Where can I go for more information?
PWSs should answer these questions in straightforward English and “test” consumers’ understanding of the report.

Even the above explanation is quite technical in terms of its approach to the report contents. The American Water Works Association (AWWA) recommends that the CCR should address the following questions:

- 1) Is the water safe? Does it meet Federal Standards?
- 2) What are the test results and how do they compare with the standards?
- 3) How might it affect me? How would I know?
- 4) What is the utility doing about it?
- 5) Where can I go for more information?

These same questions should be addressed during the year through a variety of vehicles to ensure that customers are informed about their drinking water.

In terms of the CCR, community PWSs should answer these questions in straightforward English and “test” consumers’ reaction and understanding of the report. To test customer response, a system can either hold a focus

group session (run by an outside facilitator) or ask friends, business associates (but not those working in the water system or industry), and family members to respond honestly to the draft CCR.

In addition, the AWWA recommends only that the CCR should accommodate two types of customers: those who want to know that the water is safe; and those who want to see the supporting data. (According to the AWWA, this data should include independent verification of the test results through an objective source, such as an independent lab or health department.) One way to combine these two sets of needs is to summarize the results at the top of any chart. In other words, state the water meets federal standards and is safe to drink. The tables can then list each substance, the level allowed, and the average level detected.

A CCR from Connecticut did this effectively. The headline on the first page of the report stated that “Your Water is Safe to Drink.” Information on investments in the water treatment facilities, the drinking water source and protection of watersheds followed. Their Water Quality Summary stated:

*Each year Connecticut Water conducts more than 150,000 water quality tests examining them for more than 120 potential drinking water contaminants. The table below shows only the substances that were detected in the Shore-line Region in 1997. The average level detected is listed in the middle of each column. Not all substances were detected in each system and **none** of the samples collected exceeded the highest level allowed for any substance.*

The message that the water is safe to drink was clearly transmitted to the reader and was backed up by a summary of the water quality tests. The detailed table depicting the contaminants and federal standards further supported this message. A copy of this report and other water quality reports are in **Appendix C**.

Format / Templates

The message and the manner in which the information is conveyed are closely intertwined. Each system can develop its own CCR or use a template that complies with SDWA requirements. Check the websites listed on this page for templates.

Since PWSs are responsible for paying for writing, producing and distributing the CCR, cost estimates for producing the CCR should be included in

CCR should accommodate two types of customers:

- Those who only want to know that the water is safe; and
- Those who want to see the supporting data.

DEP:
www.state.ma.us/dep

EPA:
www.epa.gov/ogwdw

AWWA:
www.awwa.org

NEWWA:
www.newwa.org

RCAP:
www.rcap.org

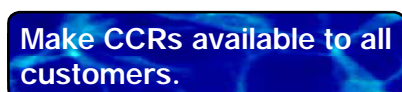


Regardless of each water system's approach to creating a CCR, the AWWA recommends the following:

- 1) Keep it simple and straightforward.
- 2) Use any research available on how your local customers prefer to receive information. For example, does your community favor public meetings over public notices in the newspaper?
- 3) Use a combination of table and explanatory text.
- 4) When possible, use graphics, photographs, and color to draw the attention of your customers. Leave plenty of white space so the material is easy to read.

Implementation

Community water systems are required to make their CCRs widely available to the public. The system must make a good faith effort to reach consumers who do not get water bills, using means recommended by the primacy agency. The EPA/DEP regulations require that:



- 1) Large water systems serving 100,000 or more customers must mail and make the report available on a publicly accessible site on the Internet.
- 2) Medium-sized water systems serving 10,000 or more customers must mail the report.
- 3) Small water systems serving fewer than 10,000 customers may mail the report or publish the full report in at least one local newspaper. Community PWSs that do not mail the report must notify customers through newspapers that the report is available upon request.
- 4) Water systems serving 500 or fewer customers must provide a notice to customers by mail, by door-to-door delivery, or by posting in an appropriate location, that the CCR is available upon request.

In this communications program, we suggest and recommend specific communication vehicles by system size. Each system should select those vehicles that can be implemented within a realistic time frame and with staff and budget considerations. Systems are categorized as follows:

- 1 = large water systems;
- 2 = medium-size water systems;
- 3 = small water systems;
- 4 = very small systems.

Phase 1: Spring/Summer

During the first year, the pre-report marketing activities will be undertaken in the spring and summer preceding the CCR October 19, 1999 delivery. In subsequent years, they should be undertaken in the spring for the July 1 CCR delivery dates. The timeline can be found at **Appendix D**.

Pre-report activities should:

- educate the public about their drinking water; and
- build confidence in public drinking water.

Pre-Report Marketing Activities and Vehicles

Water systems should begin marketing and promotional activities related to the CCRs in the Spring and Summer prior to releasing the CCRs. These activities should be directly related to the information that will be contained in the CCRs. Outreach activities should educate the public about their drinking water and build confidence in the quality of the public drinking water and system.

We **do not** recommend an advertisement and public service announcement (PSA) program preceding the delivery of the CCRs. They are expensive and time consuming to produce. The goal of the CCR is to educate the public about their drinking water and they do not need to be introduced with fanfare. These reports need to be phrased and released in a manner that will not contribute to possible public alarm.

Following are tools and communications vehicles that should be used:

Media Relations

Media relations, supplying information to reporters and editors, will be an important component of the pre-report communications activities. Local newspapers are usually receptive to information concerning a local utility. We recommend several media relations tools including letters to the editor, editorials and op-ed pieces, as well as news releases and telephone contacts. The local PWSs should use these tools to prepare the local media for the CCRs. The utility should contact the media to provide information related to each year's CCR.



Additionally, it might be useful for a regional waterworks association to brief the media on the CCR requirements and regional water concerns.

Media relations will be an important component of the pre-report communications activities.

System Recommendations: 1, 2, 3



Direct Contact - Meetings

Meetings with key opinion leaders should be arranged before the issuance of the CCR, and after the delivery of the CCR. Explain the purpose of the report and how the data can be used by the public. Let them know that the CCR will be an annual report. Try to establish an *ongoing* relationship with your local health official. Discuss the potential health impacts of contaminants, the roles of the health official and the water supplier when there is a risk to public health, and notification procedures.

If possible, the PWS should schedule meetings with the chief elected official, the health board, state and local legislators, local medical, business, civic, and environmental groups.

System Recommendations: 1, 2, 3

Direct Contact - Letters

The community PWS should prepare response templates that can be sent to customers who call with questions once the CCR is issued. These can be basic form letters thanking the customer for their call, reiterating sources for information, and suggesting they call the manager if there are additional concerns. Make sure these people are on your mailing list to receive information on drinking water events and system improvements.

System Recommendations: 1, 2, 3



Check DEP's webpage for new information and templates:

www.state.ma.us/dep

Indirect Contact - Internet

PWSs with access to a webpage should consider using it to alert users about the forthcoming CCR. Use this vehicle to reinforce the quality of the local water, explain system operations, and measures to protect the water and ensure public health. Update the information in years two and three.

System Recommendations: For all systems with Internet access.

Risk Communication

The above activities are important to undertake in advance of the publication of the CCR to minimize negative public responses. However, some water systems — particularly those that have not done a good job in communicating with their customers in the past and/or in meeting the standards — may not be prepared to answer customers' questions, address media inquiries, or calm alarmed customers. It is important for all water

systems to have a CCR response program that outlines procedures to follow for simple questions, and when there is a risk to public health. This program should be prepared, reviewed and implemented prior to releasing the CCR. Staff should be trained on how to respond to customers' questions and who to refer the call to if there is a public health concern. Procedures should be updated annually.

System Recommendations: 1, 2, 3

The following activities will help you and your staff respond to customers:

Training - Train your staff in advance of the CCR release.

Q/A - Prepare a list of potential questions and appropriate answers. Conduct practice sessions with your staff.

Pamphlet - Review DEP's "Responding to Consumers" pamphlet with all personnel directly involved in CCR response activities. Staff should be comfortable in communicating to the public about potentially alarming information. Refer to **Appendix E** for other sources of information.

Staff should be trained on how to respond to customers' questions and who to refer the call to if there is a public health concern.

Phase 2: Summer/Fall

Report Dissemination

In addition to the required content of the CCRs, water systems might want to report system improvements, tips to prevent contamination, or use of home treatment units. Under each activity in this section we will list System Requirements and/or System Recommendations based on the system size. ***Requirements are those activities which a community PWS must implement by law.***

Direct Contact - Letters

1. Mailing the CCR to Customers

According to the statute, "... *Each Community water system must mail or otherwise directly deliver one copy of the report to each customer. The system must make a good faith effort to reach consumers who do not get water bills, using means recommended by the primacy agency.*"



The most cost efficient and effective communication vehicle for delivery of the CCR is direct mail.

The most cost efficient and effective communication vehicle for delivery of the CCR is direct mail. PWS should use the United States Postal Service's "Postal Patron" program that delivers mail to every residential address in a particular town. Refer to **Appendix A** for cost estimates.

Community PWSs should prepare and mail CCRs for delivery by October 19, 1999 in year 1, and for delivery by July 1 in subsequent years.

System Requirement: 1, 2

System Recommendation: 3

2. Mailing to Public Officials

Systems are also required to send a copy of the CCR to the community's Board of Health and DEP. Refer to **Appendix B** for mailing addresses. DEP will deliver a copy of all CCRs to the State Department of Public Health.

System Requirement: 1, 2, 3

3. Mailing to Key Opinion Leaders

Community PWSs may send the CCR to local legislators, local public officials, and key opinion leaders. Include a letter summarizing the contents and offering to answer any questions.

System Recommendations: 1, 2, 3

Send 2 copies of your CCR to DEP, Boston, and 2 copies to your DEP Regional Office.

4. Mailing a Notice of CCR Availability

Systems serving 10,000 or fewer customers, but more than 500 customers, that do not mail the CCR must inform customers that the CCR is available, either through the newspaper or other means approved by DEP.

Systems serving 500 or fewer persons do not have to mail the CCR but must inform customers once a year by mail, door-to-door delivery or posting a notice in an appropriate location(s) that the report is available upon request.

System Requirement: 4

Internet

For water systems serving 100,000 or more customers, posting the CCR on a publicly accessible site on the Internet is required. Smaller systems that have access to Internet sites should post their CCR. When possible, community PWSs should provide any additional support information that will assist customers in interpreting and using the CCR data.

Community PWSs should post the CCR on their website by October 19, 1999 during the first year and July 1 in subsequent years. Include a letter from the community PWS manager that discusses the CCR.

System Requirement: 1

System Recommendation: All systems with web sites.

Water systems serving 100,000 or more customers must post the CCR on a publicly accessible site on the Internet.

Publication of Report

Systems serving fewer than 10,000 customers, but more than 500 customers that do not mail the CCR must publish the report in one or more local papers and inform customers that the CCR will not be mailed. This information should be publicized either through the newspaper(s) in which the report is published or other means approved by DEP.

Publishing the report in a local paper is one of the best ways to provide information to non-bill paying customers who might not receive mailings. Work with the local media for an adjoining story that highlights and explains the report.

Community PWSs should contact weekly paper(s) by the first of September to reserve space for publication of the report during the first year and by mid-May for subsequent years. If the community PWS serves an area that is served by more than one weekly paper, publish the CCR in at least one local paper per community.

System Requirement: 3

System Recommendation: 1, 2, 3

Publishing the report in a local paper is one of the best ways to provide information to non-bill paying customers.

Delivery of Notices

1. Direct

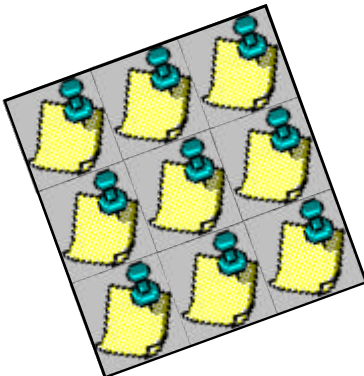
Any systems serving 500 or fewer customers do not have to mail their reports to customers. They may notify customers through mail, door-to-door notices, or newspaper notice.

Delivery of Notices – Deliver a notice stating that the report is available upon request by contacting the system. Deliver the notice by the compliance date.

System Recommendations: 4

2. Indirect

Those systems that have not mailed the report or delivered a notice to their customers, must post a notice of report availability in an appropriate location(s).



Postings – Post notices informing people that the CCRs are available in high trafficked locations such as:

1. Apartment complexes, senior citizen complexes, condominiums;
2. Community organizations and senior centers;
3. Supermarket bulletin boards;
4. Municipal buildings;
5. Churches; or
6. Cafeterias of public buildings.

System Requirement: 4

System Recommendation: 1, 2, 3

Delivery to Non-Billed Consumers

According to the EPA, a system “*must make a good faith effort to reach consumers who do not get water bills.*” Alternatives to direct mail exist, but are not as reliable as Postal Patron. DEP is requiring that Community PWSs use three of the following methods to reach non bill paying consumers:

1. Post report in the lobby of apartment complexes;
2. Place an ad in a local newspaper stating copies are available from the PWS;
3. Announce on local radio stations;

-
4. Post CCR in Town or City Hall;
 5. Place copies of CCR in the local public library closest to your facility;
 6. Post a notice in the main lobby of apartment complexes stating that the CCR is posted on a website, and give the Internet address (URL);
 7. Deliver the report in local newspaper(s); or
 8. Deliver the report to community organizations.

Systems that have exceeded standards need to have a response plan that addresses corrective action.

Non-Mandated Activities

Media

Local and national media will cover the “CCR story.” Community PWSs will be put under the media spotlight. Systems that have exceeded standards need to have a response plan that addresses corrective action. The bad news must be relayed along with the good. Use the opportunity to explain improvements and prevent future problems. This is important because the report is last year’s data and the media will want to know about the current quality of drinking water.

News Releases

When the water system publishes the CCR, the community PWS should provide information to the local media — weekly papers, cable TV, and radio under 10,000 watts — regarding the CCRs.

It is important to let the media know that your tap water is safe.

The information should be prepared in the format of a news release and should include the five Ws: *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*. The following questions should be addressed in the news release:

- What is a CCR and when was it published?
- Who prepared the CCR?
- What does the CCR say about the quality and safety of the local drinking water? This should include a quote from the water system manager *and* the town public health official, selectperson, or mayor.
- If there were levels that exceeded the Federal standard what was done to prevent or minimize a recurrence?
- Why is the information important for consumers?
- When will the next CCR be issued?
- Where can copies of the CCR be obtained?
- Where can consumers call, write or e-mail questions about the CCR or their water?

News releases should include the five Ws: *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*.

Invite local media for a tour of the system and briefing on the work of the utility.

Community PWSs should send the news release to the local media three to five days before sending the CCR (or notice of the CCR's availability) to customers. Within two days of sending the news release, the system manager should call the editor to see if any additional information is needed. This would be an opportunity for systems to invite the local media for a tour of the system and briefing on the work of the utility.

New England Water Works Associations (NEWWA) offers water suppliers a media packet. "PR in a Packet" provides a step-by-step instruction book on how to create and customize public information pieces. Each package contains sample press releases and other ready-to-use public information pieces. Please see **Appendix F** for more information about this NEWWA service.

System Recommendations: 1, 2, 3

"PR in a Packet" contains camera-ready artwork for ads, press releases and PSA's.

Radio/Television

Community PWSs can write public service announcements (PSAs) and news releases for airing on local radio and cable stations two weeks before CCR's are released.

System Recommendations: 1, 2

Phase 3: Post Report Activities

Training - Customer Relations

Each community PWS should set up a procedure for dealing with customer inquiries and concerns. In addition to advance training, all water system staff who come into contact with the public, (office staff, meter readers, facility tour guides, etc.) should be given a log in which to record information about the interaction. This log should include the date and time of the contact, the customer's name, how the contact was made, how to reach the customer, the nature of the concern, the response, and the follow-up that is needed.

Each community PWS should set up a procedure for dealing with customer inquiries and concerns.

At the end of each day, these logs should be reviewed by the system manager or customer relations staff to determine if responses were adequate. Within two days of the contact, the office manager or a customer relations representative should follow up with responses to any questions that were unanswered. Individuals with concerns should be invited to the office to speak with the manager.

Customers should receive letters (use your response templates), additional resource contact information, and an invitation to call again with other questions.

Respond immediately to requests for additional information.

System Recommendations: 1, 2, 3

Media Relations

1. Follow-Up Calls

Respond immediately to requests for additional information. The system manager should address all reporter calls. If the manager does not have the answers, refer the reporter to other sources and/or offer to look into the matter further.

System Recommendations: 1, 2, 3

2. Letters to the Editor/Editorials/Op-Ed

When articles dealing with the CCR appear in the local paper that are inaccurate and/or misleading, the manager should write a letter to the editor stating the facts. These letters should be mailed within two days of the article to improve the likelihood that the letter will appear in the next issue of the paper. The manager should enlist the support of other stake holders and allies, particularly public health officials, and request they write letters to the editor.

Write a letter stating the facts when articles dealing with the CCR are inaccurate and/or misleading.

Similarly, community PWSs should initiate opinion pieces about the CCR and the water system's plans for the future protection of local drinking water. The manager should first call the editor of the local paper and ask whether the paper would be willing to publish a piece on a particular issue. The piece should be written according to the paper's guidelines and be submitted by the deadline the editor gives the community PWS.

Letters to the editor, editorials, and op-ed pieces are not the same as news or press releases. When making editorial submissions, the writer has more control of the message than if the subject were being covered by a journalist responding to a news release. When engaging in this form of media relations, be sure to use the most appropriate vehicle to suit your needs.

Initiate opinion pieces about the CCR and the water system's plans for the future protection of local drinking water.

System Recommendations: 1, 2

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Appendix A:

Estimated Project Cost Sheet

Appendix B:

Influencer Groups List

Appendix C: ❖

Sample Water Quality Reports

Connecticut Water Quality Report

Stoughton Water Quality Report, Stoughton, MA

Milford Water Company, Milford, MA

Appendix D:

Timeline

Appendix E: ❖

Environmental, Educational & Communication Resources

Appendix F: ❖

New England Water Works Association's "PR in a Packet" Order Form

Appendix G: ❖

American Water Works Association's "Water Wiser Bill Stuffers"

❖ = Not available on the web.
Contact Maria Osorio for a hardcopy:
(617)556-1042 or maria.osorio@state.ma.us

APPENDIX A

Estimated Project Cost Sheet

Cost estimates for producing the CCR should be included in the system's budget. Since there are so many variables involved in implementing a communications plan, it is difficult to estimate an accurate range of costs.

There are both fixed costs such as staff time, and variable costs to consider. Variable costs include design expense, duplication and distribution, postage, envelopes, and travel. These estimates of time and costs are provided only as a guide and should not be considered exact.

<u>Vehicle</u>	<u>Approximate Staff Hours</u>
Meetings	5 - 10
Response Template Creation	3 - 5
Internet Postings	2 - 10
Risk Communication Training	4 - 10
Q&A Sheet / develop	3 - 5
Reproducing Fact Sheets, Brochures	7 - 10
Posting and Mailing CCRs	5
News Releases /Prepare and Process (1)	3 - 5
Public Service Announcements for Radio	2 - 3

<u>Vehicle</u>	<u>Estimated Costs</u>
The estimated cost for printing a two-color pamphlet 8 1/2 x 14, recycled paper	
1,500 copies	\$1,500 - 1,800
10,000 copies	\$1,800 - 2,400
100,000 copies	\$10,500
8 1/2 x 11, recycled paper, one color	
1,500 copies	\$675 - 800
CCR Pamphlet, three color ink, 10,000 copies 10 x 15 1/2, high quality paper	\$4,500 - \$5,000
Mailing CCR using the Postal Patron service	0.14-0.17 per item
1,500 copies	\$210 - \$255
5,000 copies	\$700 - \$850
10,000 copies	\$1,400 - \$1,700
Q & A Sheet printing 10,000 copies	\$860
100,000 copies	\$7,200
Q & A Sheets	

Additional variable costs include envelopes, mailing labels, postage for response letters, and travel. Printing costs decrease with increased quantity.

APPENDIX B

Influencer Groups

Sierra Club of Massachusetts

100 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116
Phone: 617-423-5775

The Sierra club is a nonprofit member-supported, public interest organization that promotes conservation of the natural environment by influencing public policy decisions — legislative, administrative, legal, and electoral.

The Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group (MASSPIRG)

29 Temple Place
Boston, MA 02111
Phone: 617-292-4800
Email: masspirg@pirg.org
MASSPIRG is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to serving as a watchdog for the state's citizens and environment.

Massachusetts Medical Society Headquarters

1440 Main Street
Waltham, MA 02451-1600
Phone: 781-893-3800
MDS is the governing board for medical doctors in the state of Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts Medical Society Alliance, Inc.

1440 Main Street
Waltham, MA 02451-1600
Phone: 781-893-4610
MMSA is a nonprofit volunteer, service organization of physician spouses. The Alliance is dedicated to the promotion of better health through physician and public education and community outreach.

Chambers of Commerce

Local and regional business organizations, including Chambers of Commerce, can often yield influence. Please call the local Chamber of Commerce in your city/town.

Massachusetts Association of Realtors

256 Second Ave.
Waltham, MA 02154-1139
Phone: 781-890-3700
Realtors can promote community PWS's activities and accomplishments throughout the residential and commercial real estate transaction process.

Media Outlets

Local print and broadcast media sources are important communication vehicles. Local media sources should be used as advantageously as possible. Boston University publishes an annual media guide that lists media related outlets in Massachusetts. To obtain a copy of the media guide, call 617-353-2240.

Government

Massachusetts Department of Public Health/Main Office

250 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02108-4619
Phone: 617-624-6000

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Drinking Water Program

One Winter Street, 6th Floor
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: 617-292-5770

DEP Regional Offices

DEP Western Region

436 Dwight Street
Springfield, MA 01103
Phone: 413-784-1100

DEP Central Region

627 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01605
Phone: 508-792-7650

DEP Northeast Region

205-A Lowell Street
Wilmington, MA 01887
Phone: 978-661-7600

DEP Southeast Region

20 Riverside Drive
Lakeville, MA 02347
Phone: 508-946-2700

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-Region 1**Source Water Protection Program**

Phone: 617-918-1111
Contact for New England resource protection issues, interstate resource protection, educational materials, and national legislation.

Massachusetts State Senate

State House
Boston, MA 02133
Phone: 617-722-1276

Massachusetts House of Representatives

State House
Boston, MA 02133
Phone: 617-722-2000

Governors Council

State House
Boston, MA 02133
Phone: 617-727-2756

Metropolitan District Commission

Phone: 508-792-7423
Contact for watershed protection planning in Wachusett, Ware and Quabbin watersheds.

**Public Water Systems
Timeline - 1999**

PWS 1999	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Media Relations Program						X	X	X	X			
Opinion Leader Meetings						X	X	X	X	X		
Customer Letter - Template								X				
CCR Response Program: Development and Training							X	X				
Pamphlet Review									X			
Publication of CCR										X		
Mail CCR to customers, DEP, and local BOH										X		
Mail CCR to opinion leaders and public officials									X	X		
Mail Notice of CCR - Smaller systems										X		
Internet Posting - Larger systems and others										X		
Delivery of CCR/Notices - Direct and Indirect										X		
Media Releases on CCR										X		
Customer Relations Implementation										X	X	
Media Relations Follow-up										X	X	
Letters to Editor										X		

APPENDIX D

Timelines

**Public Water Systems
Timeline - 2000**

PWS 2000	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Media Relations Program					X	X						
Opinion Leader Meetings			X	X	X							
Customer Letter - Template						X						
CCR Response Program: Development and Training					X							
Pamphlet Review						X						
Publication of CCR							X					
Mail CCR to customers, DEP, and local BOH												
Mail CCR to opinion leaders and public officials					X	X						
Mail Notice of CCR - Smaller systems							X					
Internet Posting - Larger systems and others							X					
Delivery of CCR/Notices - Direct and Indirect							X					
Media Releases on CCR							X					
Customer Relations Implementation							X	X				
Media Relations Follow-up							X	X				
Letters to Editor							X					

**Public Water Systems
Timeline - 2001**

PWS 2001	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Media Relations Program					X	X						
Opinion Leader Meetings			X	X	X	X						
Customer Letter - Template						X						
CCR Response Program: Development and Training					X							
Pamphlet Review						X						
Publication of CCR							X					
Mail CCR to customers, DEP, and local BOH												
Mail CCR to opinion leaders and public officials						X	X					
Mail Notice of CCR - Smaller systems							X					
Internet Posting - Larger systems and others							X					
Delivery of CCR/Notices - Direct and Indirect							X					
Media Releases on CCR												
Customer Relations Implementation									X			
Media Relations Follow-up								X	X			
Letters to Editor								X				

APPENDIX E

Environmental, Educational & Communication Resources

CCR Video

The American Water Works Association produces a video entitled “Your Water Quality Report: Because We Want You to Know.” Approximately five minutes long, this video is ideal for presentations to homeowners, civic groups and other community organizations. The video describes what the CCR is and why it is good news for customers. The video also explains water treatment jargon such as “MCL,” and “ppb.” For ordering information, call 1-800-926-7337.

CCR Public Service Announcement

The American Water Works Association produces a 30-second PSA entitled “Water Quality Reports.” This professionally produced PSA is designed for local TV stations and explains what the CCR is and how it benefits consumers. Contact 1-800-926-7337 for ordering information.

Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Riverways Program

Contact for: stream, ecology, shoreline surveys, adopt a stream, urban rivers, land uses, habitat protection, riparian land, and Rivers Newsletter. 617-727-1614 ext. 360.

NEWWA’s “PR in a Packet”

Developed and designed by veteran utility members of the Public Relations Committee, “PR in a Packet” assists utilities with ongoing communications with their customers. See **Appendix F** for ordering.

National Drinking Water Clearing House

Contact for drinking water information, “On Tap” newsletter, telephone assistance, low cost educational products and training. Contact: 800-624-8301 or www.ndwc.wvu.edu.

New England Interstate Educational Training Center

Contact for Groundwater Curriculum, “That Magnificent Ground Water Connection”, k-6, & 7-12. The cost is \$25 per edition. 207-767-2539.

MA Water Resources Authority

Contact for water supply, conservation, and wastewater curriculum, newsletter, and poster contests. Contact: 617-242-6000.

MA Water Works Association

Contact for educational materials, operator training, and newsletter. Contact: 978-692-0199.

New England Water Works Association

Contact for training programs for operator certifications, public relations, and educational materials. Contact: 508-478-6996 or www.newwa.org.

Safe Drinking Water Act Hotline (EPA)

The hotline’s primary function is to assist the regulated community and the public with the regulations and programs developed in response to the Safe Drinking Water Act. 800-426-4791 (9:00 AM - 5:30 PM EST).

University of Massachusetts Extension, Natural Resources and Conservation Program

Contact for watershed protection, public education materials, wastewater management, septic systems, capacity building, and non-point source pollution. Contact: 413-545-2188.

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